

A NEW YEAR'S WISH NO. 3231

**A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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"But my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
Philippians 4:19

THE Philippians had several times sent presents to Paul to supply his necessities. Though they were not themselves rich, yet they made a contribution and sent Epaphroditus with it, "an odour of sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." Paul felt very grateful—he thanked God, but he did not forget to also thank the donors—he wished them every blessing and he did as good as say, "You have supplied my need, and my God shall supply yours. You have supplied my need of temporal food and raiment out of your poverty. My God shall supply all your need out of His riches in glory."

"As," he says, in the eighteenth verse, "I have all and abound: I am full," "so," he adds, "'my God shall supply all your need.' You have sent what you gave me by the hand of a beloved brother, but God will send a better messenger to you, for He will supply all your need 'by Christ Jesus.'"

Every single word sounds as if he had thought it over and the Spirit of God had guided him in his meditation, so that he should to the fullest extent wish them back a blessing similar to that which they had sent to him, only of a richer and more enduring kind.

Now, on this New Year's Day I would desire, somewhat in the spirit of Paul, to bless those of you who have supplied, according to your abilities, the wants of God's work in my hands, and have given, even out of your poverty, to the cause of God according as there has been need. I count myself to be personally your debtor though your gifts have been for the students, and the orphans, and the book and track distributors, and not for myself. In return for your kindness, after the manner of His gracious love, "my God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

This verse is particularly sweet to me, for when we were building the Orphanage, I foresaw that, if we had no voting, and no collecting of annual subscriptions, but depended upon the goodness of God and the voluntary offerings of His people, we should have times of trial, and therefore, I ordered the masons to place upon the first columns of the Orphanage entrance, these words, "My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

The text, therefore, is cut in stone upon the right hand and upon the left of the great archway. There stands this declaration of our confidence in God—and as long as God lives, we shall never need to remove it, for He will certainly supply the needs of His own work. While we serve Him, He will furnish our tables for us.

I. The text might suggest to us a field of gloomy thought, if we wished to indulge the melancholy vein, for it speaks of "all your need." So, first, behold A GREAT NECESSITY—"all your need." What a gulf! What an abyss! "All your need." I do not know how many believers made up the church at Philippi, but the need of one saint is great enough—what must many need?

It would not be possible to tell the number of God's children on earth, but the text comprehends the need of the whole chosen family, "all your need." We will not ask you to reckon up the wonderful draft upon the divine bank account which must be made by all the needs of all the saints who are yet on earth—but please think of your own need—that will be more within the compass of your experience and the range of your meditation. May the Lord supply your need and *all* your need.

There is *our temporal need* and that is no little matter. If we have food and raiment, we should be therewith content, but there are many of God's people to whom the mere getting of food and raiment is a wearisome toil—and what with household cares, family trials, sickness of body, losses in business, and sometimes the impossibility of obtaining suitable labor, many of God's saints are as hard up as Elijah was when he sat by the brook Cherith.

If God did not send them their bread and meat in a remarkable manner, they would surely starve—but their bread shall be given them and their water shall be sure. "My God shall supply all your need." You have, perhaps, a large family and your needs are therefore greatly increased, but the declaration of the text includes the whole of your needs personal and relative.

After all, our temporal needs are very small compared with *our spiritual needs*. A man may, with the blessing of God, pretty readily provide for the needs of the body, but who shall provide for the requirements of the soul? There is need of perpetual pardon, for we are always sinning. And Jesus Christ's blood is always pleading for us and cleansing us from sin.

Every day there is need of fresh strength to battle against inward sin, and blessed be God, it is daily supplied so that our youth is renewed like the eagle's. As good soldiers of Jesus Christ, we need armor from head to foot, and even then we do not know how to wear the armor, or how to wield the sword, unless He who gave us these sacred implements shall be always with us.

Warring saint, God will supply all your need by His presence and Spirit. But we are not merely warriors, we are also workers. We are called, many of us, to important spheres of labor, (and indeed, let no man think his sphere unimportant), but here also our hands shall be sufficient for us and we shall accomplish our life-work.

You have need to be helped to do the right thing, at the right time, in the right spirit, and in the right manner—your need, as a Sunday school teacher, as an open-air preacher, and especially as a minister of the Gospel, will be very great, but the text meets all your requirements—"My God shall supply all your need."

Then comes our need in suffering, for many of us are called to take our turn in the Lord's prison-house. Here we need patience under pain and hope under depression of spirit. Who is sufficient for furnace-work? Our God will supply us with those choice graces and consolations which shall strengthen us to glorify His name even in the fires. He will either make the burden lighter, or the back stronger—He will diminish the need, or increase the supply.

Beloved, it is impossible for me to mention all the forms of our spiritual need. We need to be daily converted from some sin or other, which, perhaps, we have scarcely known to be sin. We need to be instructed in the things of God, we need to be illuminated as to the mind of Christ, we need to be comforted by the promises, we need to be quickened by the precepts, we need to be strengthened by the doctrines.

We need, oh, what do we *not* need? We are just a bag of needs and a heap of infirmities. If any one of us were to keep a *want-book*, as I have seen tradesmen do, what a huge folio it would need to be. And it might be written within and without, and crossed and re-crossed, for we are full of needs from the first of January to the end of December. But here is the mercy—"My God shall supply all your need."

Are you put in high places? Have you many comforts? Do you enjoy wealth? What need you have to be kept from loving the world, to be preserved from wantonness and pride, and the follies and fashions of this present evil world. My God will supply your need in that respect.

Are you very poor? Then the temptation is to envy, to bitterness of spirit, to rebellion against God. "My God shall supply all your need." Are you alone in the world? Then you need the Lord Jesus to be your Companion and your Companion He will be. Have you many around you? Then you have need of grace to set them a good example, to bring up your children and manage your household in the fear of God. "My God shall supply all your need."

You have need, in times of joy, to be kept sober and steady. You have need, in times of sorrow, to be strong and quit yourselves like men. You have needs in living and you will have needs in dying—but your last need shall be supplied as surely as your first. “My God shall supply *all* your need.”

Come, then, brethren, and look down into this great gulf of need and exultingly say, “O Lord, we thank You that our needs are great, for there is then more room for Your love, Your tenderness, Your power, Your faithfulness to fill the chasm.”

That first thought, which I said might be a gloomy one, has all the dreariness taken out of it by four others equally true, but each of them full of good cheer. The text not only mentions *a great necessity*, but it also mentions *a great Helper*—“My God.” Next, *a great supply*—“My God shall supply all your need.” Thirdly, *an abundant store* out of which to draw the gift—“according to his riches in glory.” And lastly, *a glorious channel* through which the supply shall come—“by Christ Jesus.”

II. So, for our enormous wants here is A GREAT HELPER. “*My God* shall supply all your need.”

Whose God is that? Why, Paul’s God. That is one of the matters in which the greatest saints are no better off than the very least, for though Paul called the Lord, “My God,” He is my God, too. My dear old friend who sits yonder and has nothing but a few pence in all the world, can also say, “and He is my God, too. He is my God and He is as much my God if I am the meanest, most obscure, and weakest of His people, as He would be my God if I were able, like Paul, to evangelize the nations.”

It is to me delightful to think that *my God is Paul’s God*, because, you see, Paul intended this—he meant to say, “You see, dear brethren, my God has supplied all my wants and as He is your God, He will supply yours.” I have been in the Roman dungeon in which Paul is said to have been confined and a comfortless prison indeed it is.

First of all you descend into a vaulted chamber, into which no light ever comes except through a little round hole in the roof. And then, in the middle of the floor of that den, there is another opening through which the prisoner was let down into a second and lower dungeon, in which no fresh air or light could possibly come to him. Paul was probably confined there.

The dungeon of the Praetorian in which he was certainly immured is not much better. Paul would have been left well-nigh to starve there, but for those good people at Philippi. I should not wonder but what Lydia was at the bottom of this kind movement, or else the jailer. They said, “We must not let the good apostle starve.” And so they made up a contribution and sent him what he wanted—and when Paul received it, he said, “My God has taken care of me. I cannot make tents here in this dark place so as to earn my own living, but my Master still supplies my need. And even so, when you are in straits, He will supply you.”

“*My God.*” It has often been sweet to me, when I have thought of my orphan children, and money has not come in, to remember Mr. Müller’s God and how He always supplied the children at Bristol. His God is my God—and I rest upon Him. When you turn over the pages of Scripture and read of men who were in sore trouble and were helped, you may say, “Here is Abraham, he was blessed in all things and Abraham’s God will supply all my need, for He is *my God*.”

I read of Elijah, that the ravens fed him. I have Elijah’s God and He can command the ravens to feed me if He pleases. The God of the prophets, the God of the apostles, the God of all the saints that have gone before us—“this God is our God for ever and ever.” It seems to be thought by some that God will not work, now as He used to do. “Oh! if we had lived in miraculous times,” they say, “then we could have trusted Him! Then there was manifest evidence of God’s existence, for He pushed aside the laws of nature and worked for the fulfillment of His promises to His people.”

Yet that was a rather coarser mode of working than the present one, for now the Lord produces the same results without the violation of the laws of nature. It is a great fact that, without the disturbance of a single law of nature, prayer becomes effectual with God. And God being inquired of by His people to do it for them, does fulfill His promise and supplies their needs. Using means of various kinds, He still gives His people all things necessary for this life and godliness. Without a miracle, He works great wonders of loving care and He will continue to do so.

Beloved, *is the God of Paul your God?* Do you regard Him as such? It is not every man who worships Paul's God. It is not every professing Christian who really knows the Lord at all, for some invent a deity such as they fancy God ought to be. The God of Paul is the God of the Old and New Testament—such a God as we find there. Do you trust such a God? Can you rest upon Him?

"There are such severe judgments mentioned in Scripture." Yes, do you quarrel with them? Then you cast Him off. But if, instead thereof, you feel, "I cannot understand You, O my God, nor do I think I ever shall, but it is not for me, a child, to measure the infinite God, or to arraign You at my bar and say to You, 'Thus should You have done, and thus ought You not to have done.' You say, 'Such am I,' and I answer, 'Such as You are, I love You and I cast myself upon You, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob—the God of Your servant Paul. You are my God and I will rest upon You.'" Very well, then, He will "supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Just think of that for a minute.

If *He* will supply you, you will be supplied, indeed for God is infinite in capacity. He is infinitely wise as to the manner of His actions and infinitely powerful as to the acts themselves. He never sleeps nor tires. He is never absent from any place, but is always ready to help. Your needs come, perhaps, at very unexpected times—they may occur in the midnight of despondency or in the noonday of delight—but God is always near to supply the surprising need. He is everywhere present and everywhere omnipotent, and He can supply all your need, in every place, at every time, to the fullest degree.

"Remember that Omnipotence has servants everywhere"—

and that, whenever God wishes to send you aid, He can do it without pausing to ask, "How shall it be done?" He has but to will it and all the powers of heaven and earth are subservient to your necessity. With such a Helper, what cause have you to doubt?

III. The next point in the text is, A GREAT SUPPLY. "My God shall *supply* all your need."

Sometimes we lose a good deal of the meaning of Scripture through the translation. In fact, nothing ever does gain by translation except a bishop. The present passage might be rendered thus, "My God will fill to the full all your need."

The illustration which will best explain the meaning is that of the woman whose children were to be sold by her creditor to pay the debts of her late husband. She had nothing to call her own except some empty oil-jars—and the prophet bade her set these in order and bring the little oil which still remained in the cruse. She did so and he then said to her, "Go among your neighbours, and borrow empty vessels, not a few."

She went from one to another till she had filled her room full of these empty vessels, and then the prophet said, "Pour out." She began to pour out from her almost empty cruse and to her surprise, it filled her largest oil-jar. She went to another and filled that, and then another and another. She kept on filling all the oil-jars till, at last she said to the prophet, "there is not a vessel more." Then the oil stayed, but not till then. So will it be with your needs.

You were frightened at having so many needs just now, were you not? But now be pleased to think you have them, for they are just so many empty vessels to be filled. If the woman had borrowed only a few jars, she could not have received much oil—but the more empty vessels she had—the more oil she obtained. So the more wants and the more needs you have—if you bring them to God, so much the better—for He will fill them all to the brim and you may be thankful that there are so many to be filled. When you have no more wants (but oh, when will that be), then the supply will be stayed, but not till then.

How gloriously God gives to His people! We wanted pardon once—He washed us and He made us whiter than snow. We wanted clothing, for we were naked. What did He do? Give us some rough dress or other? Oh! no! but He said, "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." It was a fortunate thing for

the prodigal that his clothes were all in rags, for then he needed raiment and the best robe was brought forth.

It is a grand thing to be sensible of spiritual needs, for they will all be supplied. A conscious want in the sight of God—what is it but a prevalent request for a new mercy? We have sometimes asked Him to comfort us, for we were very low. But when the Lord has comforted us, He has so filled us with delight that we have been inclined to cry with the old Scotch divine, “Hold, Lord, hold! It is enough. I cannot bear more joy. Remember I am only an earthen vessel.” We, in relieving the poor, generally give no more than we can help, but our God does not stop to count His favors—He gives like a king. He pours water upon him that is thirsty and floods upon the dry ground.

IV. We must pass on to the next thought and consider for a minute or two THE GREAT RESOURCES out of which this supply is to come. “My God shall supply all your need, *according to his riches in glory.*” The preacher may sit down now, for He cannot compass this part of the text. God’s riches in glory are beyond all thought.

Consider *the riches of God in nature*—who shall count His treasures? Get away into the forests—travel on league after league among the trees which cast their ample shade for no man’s pleasure, but only for the Lord. Mark on lone mountainside and far-reaching plain the myriads of flowers whose perfume is for God alone. What wealth each spring and summer is created in the boundless estates of the great King!

Observe the vast amount of animal and insect life which crowds the land with the riches of divine wisdom, for “the earth is the LORD’s, and the fullness thereof.” Look towards the sea—think of those shoals of fish, so countless that when only the fringe of them is touched by our fishermen, they find enough food to supply a nation.

Mark, too, the sunken treasures of the ocean which no hand gathers but that of the Eternal. If you would see the wealth of the Creator, cast your eye to the stars—tell ye their numbers if you can. Astronomy has enlarged our vision and made us look upon this world as a mere speck compared with innumerable other worlds that God has made, and it tells us that, probably, all the myriads of worlds that we can see with the telescope are a mere fraction of the countless orbs which are tenant infinite space. Vast are God’s riches in nature. It needs a Milton to sing, as he sang in *Paradise Lost*, the riches of the creating God.

The riches of God in providence are equally without bound. He says to this creature, “Go,” and he goes, and to another, “Do this,” and he does it, for all things do His bidding. Think of *the wealth of God in grace*. There nature and providence stand eclipsed, for we have the fountain of eternal love, the gift of an infinite sacrifice, the pouring out of the blood of His own dear Son, and the covenant of grace in which the smallest blessing is infinite in value. The riches of His grace! “God is rich in mercy”—rich in patience, love, power, kindness, rich beyond all conception.

Now your needs shall be supplied according to the riches of nature, and the riches of providence, and the riches of grace. But this is not all—the apostle chooses a higher style and writes “*according to his riches in glory.*” Ah, we have never seen God in glory! That were a sight our eyes could not at present behold. Christ in His glory, when transfigured upon earth, was too resplendent a spectacle even for the tutored eyes of Peter, and James, and John.

“At the too-transporting light”—

darkness rushed upon them and they were as men that slept. What God is in His glory do you know, you angels? Does He not veil His face even from you lest, in the excessive brightness of His essence, even you should be consumed? Who amongst all His creatures can tell the riches of His glory, when even the heavens are not pure in His sight and He charges His angels with folly?

“His riches in glory.” It means not only the riches of what He has done, but the riches of what He could do, for if He has made hosts of worlds, He could make as many myriads more, and then have but

begun. The possibilities of God omnipotent, who shall reckon? But the Lord shall supply all your need, according to such glorious possibilities. When a great king gives according to his, riches, then he does not measure out stinted alms to beggars, but he gives *like a king*, as we say. And if it be some grand festival day, and the king is in his state array, his largesse is on a noble scale.

Now, when God is in His glory, think you, if you can, what must be the largesse that He distributes—what the treasures that He brings forth for His own beloved! Now, “according to his riches in glory,” He will supply all your needs. After that, dare you despond? O soul, what insanity is unbelief! What flagrant blasphemy is doubt of the love of God! He must bless us, and blessed by Him, we must be blest indeed. If He is to supply our needs “according to his riches in glory”—they will be supplied to the full.

V. Now let us close our meditation by considering THE GLORIOUS CHANNEL by which these needs are to be supplied—“According to his riches in glory *by Christ Jesus*.”

You shall have all your soul’s wants satisfied, but you must go to Christ for everything. “By Christ Jesus.” That is the fountainhead where the living waters well up. You are not supply your wants by your own care and fretfulness. “Consider the lilies, how they grow.” You are to be enriched “by Christ Jesus.”

You will not have your spiritual wants supplied by going to Moses and working and toiling as if you were your own savior, but by faith in Christ Jesus. Those who will not go to Christ Jesus must go without grace, for God will give them nothing in the way of grace except through His Son. Those who go to Jesus the most, shall oftenest taste of His abundance, for through Him all blessings come.

My advice to myself and to you is that we abide in Him, for since that is the way by which the blessing comes, we had better abide in it. We read of Ishmael that he was sent into the wilderness with a bottle, but Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-Roi, and it is wise for us to dwell by the well Christ Jesus, and never trust to the bottles of our own strength. If you wander from Christ Jesus, brother, you depart from the center of bliss.

All this year I pray that you may abide by the well of this text. Draw from it. Are you very thirsty? Draw from it, for it is full. And when you plead this promise, the Lord will supply all your need. Do not cease receiving from God for a minute. Let not your unbelief hinder the Lord’s bounty, but cling to this promise, “My God shall supply all your need, according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

I know not how to wish you a greater blessing. If you are enabled by the Holy Spirit to realize it, you will enjoy what I earnestly wish for you, namely—

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

2 KINGS 4:1-7; PHILIPPIANS 4

2 KINGS 4

VERSE 1. *Now there cried a certain woman of the wives of the sons of the prophets unto Elisha, saying, Thy servant, my husband is dead’ and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD: and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen.*

It is sad for anyone to be in debt and yet there may be circumstances under which even a man who fears the Lord may die in debt and leave no provision for his wife and children except a large portion of sorrow. In the case of this poor widow, it was not long before she cried to Elisha, “The creditor is come.”

He generally does come pretty quickly and he had come to her to take away her two sons whom she needed to support her—to make them bondmen—slaves, to serve him for a certain number of years till

their father's debt was worked out. And this hurt the poor woman's heart, so she came to see what the Lord's servant could do for her. She could not bear to see her sons taken away to serve as bondmen to a stranger, through no fault of their own, and possibly, through no fault on their father's part.

2. And Elisha said unto her, What shall I do for thee?

Elisha was probably about as poor as she was, so what could he do for her?

2. Tell me, what hast thou in the house?

"Whatever there is in the house must go towards this debt, so 'tell me what have you in the house?'"

2. And she said, Thy handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil.

Her husband had been a God-fearing man, a true servant of JEHOVAH, yet he had died in such dire poverty that his widow had to say to Elisha, "Thine handmaid hath not any thing in the house, save a pot of oil." Those were indeed bad times for the sons of the prophets, for, in those days men cared more for false prophets and for the priests of Baal than for the servants of the Most High God.

3. Then he said, Go, borrow vessels abroad of all thy neighbors, even empty vessels; borrow not a few. [See Sermon #2063, The Filling of Empty Vessels]

"Get as many empty oil jars as ever you can, it does not matter how great nor how many they are, but they must be empty."

4-6. And when thou art come in, thou shalt shut the door upon thee and upon thy sons, and shalt pour out into all those vessels, and thou shalt set aside that which is full. So she went from him, and shut the door upon her and upon her sons, who brought the vessels to her; and she poured out. And it came to pass, when the vessels were full, that she said unto her son, Bring me yet a vessel. And he said unto her, There is not a vessel more. And the oil stayed. [See Sermon #1467-A, The Oil and the Vessels]

There was no reason why "the oil stayed" except that there was "not a vessel more" to receive the flowing stream.

7. Then she came and told the man of God.

She must have understood that the oil was to be used for the payment of her debt, but she was a woman of delicate sensitiveness, with a tender conscience—as honest people usually are—so she wanted full permission from Elisha before she would dispose of the oil. She regarded it, in some sense, as his oil—as it was through using the means that he had directed that her little store of oil had been so miraculously multiplied. So "she came and told the man of God."

7. And he said, Go, sell the oil, and pay thy debt, and live, and live thou and the children of the rest.

What a merciful deliverance that was for the poor widow and her sons! And there have been many other deliverances, in the experiences of God's people, which, if they have not been quite as miraculous as this one, have nevertheless been very remarkable—although God has appeared to work them in the common way in which He is constantly working. Yet they have been uncommon mercies all the while.

Now let us read Paul's letter to the Christians at Philippi who had been the means of supplying his necessities, though not in the miraculous manner in which the prophet Elisha had supplied the needs of that poor widow.

PHILIPPIANS 4

VERSE 1. Therefore, my brethren dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the lord, my dearly beloved. [See Sermon #1959, The Watchword For Today—Stand Fast]

Paul had a very warm affection for the church at Philippi. You remember how that church was established—first with the baptized household of Lydia and afterwards with the baptized household of the jailer. These saints at Philippi were, in a special sense, Paul's spiritual children. They were very generous and kind to him, and his heart was very warm with love to them, so he called them, "my brethren dearly beloved," and then again, "my dearly beloved."

2. I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.

These two women had fallen out with one another. They evidently differed upon some question or other so that they were not “of the same mind in the Lord,” and Paul thought it so important that there should be perfect unity and love in the church at Philippi, as well as everywhere else, that he besought these two women, of whom we know nothing else, that they would be “of the same mind in the Lord.”

Notice that he beseeches each of them in exactly the same way—“I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche.” He has a, “beseech,” for each of them. Perhaps, if he had written, “I beseech Euodias and Syntyche,” the latter lady might have fancied that he was not quite so earnest about her as he was about Euodias, so he puts it, “I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord.”

Have any of *you* fallen out, my dear friends? I do not know of any of you who have done so, but if you have, I say to all of you, men or women, “I beseech you, that you be of the same mind in the Lord.” There is nothing like perfect unity in a Christian church. If there is even a little division, it will grow to something much worse, by and by, so I beseech you, “be of the same mind in the Lord.”

3. And I entreat you, also, true yokefellow,—

Their minister,—

3. Help those women which labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other of my fellow labourers, whose names are in the book of life.

They helped me, and they have helped you, so help them with encouraging words and in every other way that you can.

4. Rejoice in the Lord always:

Not only now and then, on high days and holiday, have a time of joy, but “rejoice in the Lord always.”

4. And again I say, Rejoice. [See Sermon #2405, Joy, A Duty]

He had said this before, as you will see in the first verse of the third chapter, which begins, “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Now he writes it again and repeats it in the same verse—“Rejoice... Rejoice.” It is so important that believers should be full of joy that Paul writes three times over in a short space, “Rejoice in the Lord.” “Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice.”

5. Let your moderation be known unto all men.

Be men who are God-governed, because God governs those who run to excess in nothing. Some go to excess in one way and some in another, but all excess is to be avoided. “Let your moderation be known unto all men.”

5-6. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing;

This is not a good translation of the original—it does not convey the sense of the Greek. It should be, “Be *anxious* for nothing.” Of course you ought to be careful about everything. You cannot be too careful, but you never ought to be *care-full*, you must care to be right with God, yet you must not be filled with care about anything. “Be anxious for nothing.” Do not fret, do not worry, do not make other people miserable by your fretting and fuming and fussing.

6. But in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. [See Sermon #2351, Prayer, The Cure For Care]

Ah! this is the way to find the cure for all your anxieties. Take all your troubles to God with a prayer and with a song. Do not go without either the thanksgiving or the prayer, but bear your burden at once to God and ask Him to bear it for you.

7-8. And And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

If anything is true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report—be you on that side. A Christian is on the side of everything that makes for purity, chastity, and honesty, that is for the good of men and the

glory of God. Whenever anyone is making out a list of those who will fight for everything that is right and good, every Christian should say to the man writing the list, "Set down my name, sir."

9-10. *Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you. But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity.*

You see that Paul did not really mean, "Be careful for nothing," for he says here that these Philippians had cared for him and he praises them for being careful of him. They had lovingly thought of him who was their spiritual father—and when they knew that he was shut up as a prisoner in Rome, and suffering want, they took care to send something to relieve and cheer him.

11. *Not that I speak in regard to want, for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.* [See Sermon #320, Contentment]

"I have been initiated—for that is the word—"among those who are content with such things as they have."

12-13. *I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* [See Sermons #345 and #346, Self-Sufficiency Slain and All-Sufficiency Magnified]

"I can be poor, or I can have abundance, if you send it to me, but these things make no real difference to me. I have been made invulnerable either to suffering or to abundance." Blessed is the man who has got as far as that. It is a wonderful work of grace when a man can truly say this.

14-15. *Notwithstanding ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only.*

I should not wonder if it was Lydia who was at the bottom of that giving and receiving, and perhaps the jailer also. They were evidently thoughtful and grateful people. They remembered the apostle's sufferings and wants, and did all they could to help and cheer him.

16-17. *For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.*

He did not look at it as merely something that would ease him, but he looked at it as a token of gratitude for the spiritual blessings they had received through him. It showed that they loved the Gospel which he preached and that they also loved him for having been blessed by God to their souls—and this cheered and delighted him. But to show that he was not asking for more, he says—

18. *But I have all, and abound: I am full,—*

I do not suppose that it amounted to much, but it was all that the apostle needed—and so he says to them, "I have all, and abound: I am full,"—

18-19. *Having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

I am sure that, when they read this verse, they all felt glad that they had had a share in the subscription to relieve the apostle's wants.

20-21. *Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. Salute every saint in Christ Jesus.*

"Give them all my love and tell them how grateful I am to them."

21-22. *The brethren which are with me greet you. All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.*

Exposed to the greatest perils and yet brave to confess Christ. They may have been nothing but poor kitchen maids, or they may have been among the Praetorian guards who watched and guarded the palace and the prisoners, but they must have their title set down in the letter, "chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

23. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

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